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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 430th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 July 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.25 p.m.

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION (A/AC.159/L.119) (continued)

1. Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar), Rapporteur, speaking as the representative of Madagascar, said that although the Committee's work had intensified, it had been unrealistic to believe that, after 20 years of standstill, it would be possible in only 10 working days to find new approaches leading to the achievement of the goals contained in the 1971 Declaration, and make an exhaustive study of the complex ramifications of the issues involved and differing perceptions on those issues. Nevertheless, positive results had been achieved at the current session, and it was to be hoped that those results would convince all the permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean of the need for continued participation in the Committee's work.

2. With the favourable development of the international situation, the end of the "cold war" and the strengthening of mutual understanding and cooperation among States, it would be unthinkable to disregard the peoples of an area as vast as the Indian Ocean and to leave it up to them to find solutions to the political, economic and social problems facing them. Madagascar, for its part, confirmed its commitment to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

3. Speaking as Rapporteur, he introduced the Committee's draft report, contained in document A/AC.159/L.119, and made the following oral revisions to it: in paragraph 9, the words "2 June" should be changed "2 July". The last sentence of paragraph 10 should begin: "A Chairman's summary of the Committee's discussion is contained as an annex to the present report"; the rest of the sentence would continue unchanged. The first line of paragraph 18 should read: "The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that it continue consideration of new alternative ..."; the rest of the paragraph would continue unchanged.

4. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report (A/AC.159/L.119), as orally revised.

5. It was so decided.

6. Mr. CURE (Mauritius) said that the Committee's decision in 1992 to consider new approaches was a decisive step which had been endorsed by the General Assembly. The ensuing broad consultations had provided a firm foundation for the continuation of the Committee's work, and the results of its current session had exceeded expectations, although there was still a long way to go.

7. In the Chairman's summary, the existence of different views was recognized, but at the same time there was a clear indication of the willingness of countries to discuss matters of concern to them, rather than avoiding such issues; that in itself vividly confirmed the significance of the work of the Committee as a vital mechanism for the formation of consensus, not a consensus that was as formless as water, but a constructive consensus that reflected the

(Mr. Cure, Mauritius)

existence of political will and confirmed the need to ensure the broadest participation in the Committee's work. He hoped that the conclusions and recommendations that had been adopted by consensus would be duly accepted by the General Assembly.

8. Mr. BELIZ (Panama) expressed satisfaction that delegations had been able to reach consensus and adopt the report.

9. Mr. WU Chengjiang (China) said that the Committee's adoption of its report signified success in its work and the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly in resolution 47/59.

10. Ms. McKAY (Australia) said that at the session everyone had recognized that the changes which had taken place in the international situation were of enormous significance for the Committee's work. That alone had already made it possible for the Committee to move forward in its work. There had also been a recognition of the need to expand the concept of security, which included not only military aspects but also such problems as the environment, refugees, drug trafficking and ethnic conflicts, which could lead to destabilization in the region. Those problems were already being taken up by other bodies. The Committee's task was, as before, to work to establish an atmosphere of trust in which those problems could be resolved and to study those aspects of confidence-building which had not yet been taken up.

11. Basic responsibility for the future of the Indian Ocean region lay with the countries of that region. If they assumed that responsibility, others would join them; if not, they would be ignored or their work would be done by others on their behalf. The Committee needed a more creative and innovative approach so as to build on the important but still limited achievements of the current year.

12. Mr. YUDIN (Russian Federation) said that at the current session delegations, without avoiding the consideration of complex issues or the presentation of their countries' basic positions, had been able to produce a consensus report. Despite the differences that existed, general approaches were evolving which, it was to be hoped, would ultimately lead to the establishment of an atmosphere of greater peace and greater security, stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. The report reflected the main mood prevailing at the session - the desire to achieve concrete results and to draw into the discussion new countries which could make a contribution to the Committee's work.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the session that was coming to an end was of cardinal significance. Since 1980 the Committee had been working towards its goal - the convening of a United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean. The preparatory work had not been completed until 1991. By then, however, three permanent members of the Security Council had left the Committee, and a number of major maritime users were not participating in the Committee's work. The way out of that impasse had been General Assembly resolution 47/59, in which the Committee was requested to consider new alternative approaches and also to address the complex ramifications of the issues involved and differing perceptions on those issues as well as the future role of the Committee.

(The Chairman)

14. During the discussions that had taken place, vital problems had been taken up, but without the rancour and polemics which, unfortunately, had characterized the Committee's work in the past. As a result, it had been possible to draw to a greater extent on common ground in positions and reduce disputed points to a minimum. It had been possible to devise a generally acceptable framework for a progressive movement forward. The basis of that wise and forward-looking balance were the conclusions and recommendations that had been adopted (section III of the Committee's report). Enumerating those conclusions and recommendations, he noted the constructive contribution made by delegations which had been joined in the current year by the delegations of three Member States which had not previously participated in the Committee's work. The basic political significance of the consensus was that at the session a desire to move forward had been collectively expressed. The Committee had made a recommendation on continuing the consideration of new alternative approaches, a number of which had been outlined at the current session. All the countries concerned should participate in that process so as to move forward expeditiously, on the basis of a realistic programme of work.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.